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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

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To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

YOU cannot do a greater ſervice to the world, than by promoting the real happineſs of the beſt part of it, the fair ſex; for whoſe ſake I beg you will publiſh the following animadverſions upon an error in education, which the good ſenſe of the preſent age, with all it's attachments to nature, has not totally eradicated. The error I mean is putting ROMANCES into the hands of young ladies; which being a ſort of writing that abounds in characters nowhere to be found, can, at beſt, be but a uſeleſs employment, even ſuppoſing the readers of them to have neither reliſh nor underſtanding for

for ſuperiour concerns. But as this is by no means the caſe, and as the happineſs of mankind is deeply intereſted in the ſentiments and conduct of the ladies, why do we contribute to the filling their heads with fancies, which render them incapable either of enjoying or communicating that happineſs? Why do we ſuffer thoſe hearts, which ought to be appropriated to the various affections of ſocial life, to be alienated by the mere creatures of the imagination? In ſhort, why do we ſuffer thoſe who were born for the purpoſe of living in ſociety with men endued with paſſions and frailties like their own, to be bred up in daily expectation of living *out* of it with ſuch men as never have exiſted? Believe me, Mr. Fitz-Adam (as much the age of nature as this is thought to be) I know ſeveral unmarried ladies, who in all probability had been long ago good wives and good mothers, if their imaginations had not been early perverted with the chimerical ideas of romantic love, and themſelves cheated out of the CHARITIES (as Milton calls them) and all the real bleſſings of thoſe relations, by the hopes of that ideal happineſs, which is nowhere to be found but in ROMANCES.

IT is a principle with ſuch ladies, that it matters not if the qualities they aſcribe to the heroes of theſe books be real or imaginary: upon which principle, a footman may as well be the hero as his maſter: for nothing, it ſeems, is neceſſary to dub him ſuch, but the magic power of a lady's fancy, which creates chimæra's much faſter than nature can produce realities.

SURELY, Mr. Fitz-Adam, this doctrine of ideal happineſs is calculated for the meridian of Bedlam, and ought never to be received beyond the limits of Moorfields. For if we ſhould admit that the monarch in his cell

cell is as happy as the monarch on his throne, while both their objects are ambition; yet the happineſs of ſociety muſt depend only on the reaſonableneſs of individuals. A father is by this pernicious doctrine frequently robbed of the comfort he expected in his child: a daughter is deprived of the protection and ſupport ſhe might otherwiſe have claimed from her father; and ſociety is interrupted in forming it's general ſyſtem of happineſs, which thoſe relations ſhould contribute to eſtabliſh.

THESE, Mr. Fitz-Adam, are almoſt the neceſſary conſequences of reading ROMANCES: and as human nature is apt to be more influenced by example than precept, I ſhall beg leave to enforce the truth of what I have advanced by the following hiſtory.

CLARINDA was the only child of a wealthy merchant, who placed all his happineſs in the expectations of her merit and the rewards of it. Nature had encouraged him in that expectation, by giving her a very liberal portion of her favours; and he determined to improve it by every means which the fondneſs of a parent could ſuggeſt to him. But, unfortunately for CLARINDA, her father's good intentions were not guided by a judgment equally good: for it happened to her, as it too often does in the education of young women, that his endeavours were rather directed to grace her perſon, than to adorn her mind: and whatever qualifications he might wiſh the latter to poſſeſs, he ſeemed ſolicitous only of ſuch as might recommend the former. Dreſs, dancing and muſic were the whole of her accompliſhments: and they ſo immoderately ſoftened the natural effeminacy of her mind, that ſhe contracted an averſion to every kind of reading, which did not repreſent the ſame ſoftneſs

neſs of manners. Every hour which was not appropriated to one of theſe accompliſhments, was ſpent in the enſnaring practice of reading NOVELS and ROMANCES; of which CLELIA was her favourite, and the hero of it continually in her head.

WHILST CLARINDA was thus accompliſhing herſelf, the father was ſtudying to reward the merits of his daughter with a huſband ſuitable to her rank and fortune. Nor was he long unſucceſsful in his care: for THEODORE, the ſon of a neighbouring gentleman in the country, was choſen for this honour. But though all who knew him declared him to be worthy of it, unhappily for CLARINDA, ſhe alone thought otherwiſe. For notwithſtanding he loved her with a ſincerity hardly to be equalled, yet as he did not approach her in heroics, nor firſt break his paſſion to her in ſhady groves, he was not the hero ſhe expected: he neither bowed gracefully, moved majeſtically, nor ſighed pathetically enough to charm a heart which doated on romantic grimace: in ſhort he was not the hero which CLELIA had impreſſed on CLARINDA's imagination. But, what was ſtill more unfortunate, THEODORE's VALET DE CHAMBRE was compleatly ſo. That happy hero was a Frenchman, who to an imagination little leſs romantic than CLARINDA's, had added all the fantaſtic levity of his country; which happening firſt to diſcover itſelf in thoſe very ſhades where ſhe uſed to meditate on the hero of CLELIA, ſo captivated her heart with MONSIEUR ANTOINE the VALET, that her imagination inſtantly annihilated every circumſtance of his rank and fortune, and added every enchanting accompliſhment to his mind and perſon.

THERE is no reſiſting the impetuoſity of romantic love. Like enthuſiaſm, it breaks through all the reſtraints

ſtraints of nature and cuſtom, and enables, as well as animates it's votaries, to execute all it's extravagant ſuggeſtions. A paſſion of this ſublime original could have none of thoſe difficulties in diſcovering itſelf to it's object, which are apt to oppoſe the raſh wills of vulgar mortals; and therefore it was not long before CLARINDA gave ANTONIO (for ſo ſhe choſe to ſoften the unharmonious name of ANTOINE) to underſtand that love, like death, levelled all diſtinctions of birth and fortune, and introduced the loweſt and higheſt into Elyſium together.

ANTONIO, who had been almoſt as converſant with ROMANCES as CLARINDA, received the firſt intimations of the lady's paſſion for him with a tranſport that had leſs ſurpriſe than joy in it; and from the firſt diſcovery of it, there aroſe an intercourſe between them, which entirely defeated the pretenſions of THEODORE, and confirmed CLARINDA's paſſion for his VALET.

BUT as much a hero as ANTONIO appeared to be both to CLARINDA and himſelf during the firſt part of this tender intercourſe, in the progreſs of it he diſcovered that he wanted one principal ingredient in the compoſition of that ideal character: he had not courage enough to be a martyr. For though he doated on CLARINDA's perſon, whilſt her fortune was annexed to it, yet he could not bring himſelf to ſtarve even with an angel: and this he ſoon perceived muſt be his fate, if he poſſeſſed the one without the other. Such a diſappointment from a hero to a DIDO, or to any woman who expected a natural gratification of her paſſion, would have excited reſentment and averſion. This would have been nature, which romantic love has no knowledge of: it never changes any of thoſe ideas with which